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✓ THE BIG GREY CAR.

A Drama In One Act

By

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2033--63 Street.

Brooklyn. N.Y.

Characters:

Dr Hilden

Mrs Ridley

Annette Ridley

Sue, A Maid

Detective

Scene: Living room in Dr Hilden's home.

The doctor is lying on couch, reading a paper.

Enter Sue, the maid.

Sue A patient, sir.

Dr takes out his watch and looks at it, It is twenty minutes before office hours. I need some rest. Tell them I am out.

Sue in unsteady tone, I--I-- wish you would attend to this poor woman; she has scalded her arm. She is in agony.

Dr jumps up, Why didn't you say so in the first place? The poor woman. He looks at Sue as he takes hold of door knob, Sue, you're a ---. I'll say the rest inside. He goes in.

Sue If I had rushed in and said, Doctor, there's a woman out there that's scalded her arm, he'd say: What's the hurry, where's the fire. She picks up stray things around the room. I think two years in Doctor Hilton's office is a good enough recommendation for any girl. I am going to look for----Bells rings----. Another one. She goes to the door leading to the hall.---This one do'nt get in. Exit Sue.

Silence a few moments; then voices are heard.

Sue again appears in doorway followed by Mrs Ridley and daughter. All three enter room. Mrs R. is pale and nervous looking. Her daughter is very pale and in a state of almost total collapse.

Sue Your son left here about an hour ago. He was expecting his father. I think he went to meet him. She looks at Miss Ridley. What's the matter, Miss Ridley? Are you ill, shall I call the doctor?

Mrs R Is the doctor in?

Sue Yes, he's got a patient in the office now; but I'll go and tell him Miss Annette is ill. She goes to the door.

Mrs R Did you say my son went to meet his father?

Sue Yes, Ma'm; he wrote for him to expect him on the 7, 14. He came here and asked the doctor's son to ride over to the station with him, but Mr Joe had a previous engagement. She looks at Miss R. again. I'll send the doctor right in Exit maid.

Annette sinks into chair; Mrs R. rushes over to her.

Mrs R Annette, if you want the doctor to suspect something, just keep this up.

Annette rises, looks around as if she feared some one. She puts her arms around her mother.

Ann Please, oh, please, mother, Let's tell the doctor the truth.

Mrs R Are you insane? You know the doctor as well as I do. If it was his own son did it, he would hand him over to the law.

Ann in great terror, Then what are we going to do?

Mrs R There is only one sensible thing to do, and that is to take something for your nerves and then forget all about it

Ann in tone of horror, Forget all about it? You can't mean that, mother. We ran down a boy, we left him unconscious in the road. Suppose---suppose he dies.

Mrs R as she listens and looks cautiously around, He was'nt hurt half as badly as you think. He was stunned, that's all. Nine chances out of ten if we had stopped and done all we could for him his people would have seen a good chance to get some easy money. They'd put him to bed, get doctors and lawyers ans swindle us out of every cent we've got.

Ann You are trying to make yourself believe he was'nt hurt; but I am sure he was. Our car struck his wheel with terrific force. You know it, mother, as well as I do. She clenches her hands---, It was terrible to ride off and let thaa poor helpless boy lie---

Mrs R. hearing foot steps puts her hand over her daughter's mouth. As door opens, she removes her hand. Enter maid.

Sue The doctor is sorry to keep you waiting, Mrs Ridley, he's got a patient with a scalded arm, and he is trying hard to relieve her pain. Make yourself comfortable; he'll be with you in a few minutes.

Mrs R Take off your hat, Annette; it will help relieve your headache.

Sue going over to Miss R.. Your mother is right, Miss Ridley, let me help you. She removes her hat.
Bell rings. Exit maid.

Mrs R Annette, if you do'nt want your mother to be dragged through the courts you had better brace up a nd use common sense. It's done now; it can't be helped. We could'nt find the boy now if we tried.

Mrs R Not exactly. Our chauffeur ^{Mrs R} lost control of the car; it went flying pell mell for nearly half a mile before he could stop it. We had a narrow escape.

Dr Well, I should say so. If you had hit anything--Miss R. is trembling all over---I don't think you would be here to tell about it; but it's all over now. I'll get you something to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ quieten your nerves, and you can lie right down here for an hour or so. He goes to the door.

Ann But doctor---

Dr No butting; you'll do just as I say. You came for medical advise and you are getting it. Exit doctor.

Ann I would rather lie down at the hotel, I could make myself comfortable.

Mrs R I will tell him.

Enter doctor with small bottle and glass dropper; he places bottle on table, goes over to Annette and takes her pulse.

Dr That pulse is going at the rate of fifty miles a minute, you must lie down at once.

Ann I would rather take the medicine with me to the hotel.

Dr You'll do nothing of the kind; you will lie down right here, at once. He takes up bottle and dropper, goes to door and calls: Sue, bring me a glass of water and a medicine glass. He turns to Mrs R. You do'nt look as if the fright passed over your head either.

Mrs R. motions to him not to tell Annette.

Enter Sue with water and medicine glass, hands them to him.

Dr puts them on the table. Sue turns to leave.

Dr Do'nt go, Sue; take Miss Ridley to the room off this one, make her comfortable, open the windows wide, and turn off the light so she will be sure to get a good nap.

Mrs R But doctor---

Dr I said never mind buts. If she feels very much better when she wakes you an both go to the hotel; if she does'nt you'll both spend the night here. He pours ten drops carefully into medicine glass, hands it to Annette, who drinks it's contents. Now run along with Sue. Sue opens door to room opposite office door.

Sue to her mother, I think we ought to send some one to the station for Roy. He'll be waiting for Dad, and Dad came. He wo'nt know what to make of it.

Mrs R I never thought of that. Well, do'nt you worry; I may run over myself. She kisses Annette.

Exit Miss R. and maid.

Mrs R Now, doctor, if you do'nt mind, I will take something for my nerves.

Dr I think you need it. She shakes her head; she can hardly speak. The doctor takes her hand, frowns, feels her pulse, then drops her hand gently. he looks at bottle, shakes his head, goes in to other room and returns at once with bottle of tablets. He puts two tablets in glass water, hands it to Mrs R. who drinks it.

Dr looking steadily into Mrs R's eyes, You must have experienced a terrible shock.

Mrs R in low tone, I can't bear to think of what might have happened.

Dr Well, do'nt think. If you will take my advise you will lie down here on the couch and take a nap too. The tablets I gave you will help you sleep and quieten your nerves.

Mrs R I must lie down; I am not fit to go to the station. Will you please tell Clarke to ride over and tell Hoy to come here to meet us?

Dr Of course I will. He arranges some cushions on the couch Sue will get you a cover. He goes to door. I hope you will both feel better when you awaken.

Mrs R Thank you.

Exit doctor.

Mrs R Removes her hat; shivers all over. I do'nt think a turkish bath could warm me up now. She rises, goes to couch. I wonder---

Sue enters, blanket on her arm, It's too bad you both got such a fright.

Mrs R lies down, shivering, Cover me quick; I feel dreadfully cold.

Sue covering her, Is there anything else I can do?

Mrs R Just turn out the lights, please.

Sue turns down the lights and leaves.

All is in almost total darkness. Silence a few moments, then Mrs Ridley's voice is heard: If the boy should die. All is quiet again; then a moan is heard, then quiet again.

A deep sigh is heard; silence a few moments.

Then the doctor's voice is heard from within: Quick, get oxygen tank.

Sue is heard from within: Shall I ring for another doctor?

Dr is heard from within: Yes, yes, quick, get Dr Stevenson; if he is not in get Dr Lambert. But for God's sake get some doctor as quick as you can. I must operate this minute.

Mrs R. is heard saying: Something has happened.

Lights go up. Mrs R. is standing near door a picture of anxiety. She opens door partly so voices are heard plainly.

Mrs R Something terrible has happened. I wonder what it is?

Dr, from within: Is Doctor Stevenson coming?

Sue, from within: He's not in; but Doctor Lambert will be here in a minute.

Dr, from within: Hand me that jar of sponges, quick; now the solution. For God's sake hurry; do'nt you see he is almost dead.

Mrs R. is listening; she is trembling with fear.

Mrs R I wish I could go in and do something; but I can't, something seems to hold me. Bell rings. There is the other doctor; I wonder who it is, it must be an awful case.

Dr, from within : There is no time to lose, doctor, we must operate at once.

Dr L., from within: Looks bad, doctor; I am afraid operating we'nt do much good.

Dr, from within: I am going to take a chance.

Mrs R. is listening, spellbound.

Dr L., from within: He'll die under the knife.

Dr, from within: He'll die without it. There is a spark

of hope with it; so let's take a chance. Ther's the ether.
Sue, from within: I'm afarid I will faint if you keep me
here any longer.

Dr You can go; Doctor Lambert and I will manage.

Enter Sue, looks at Mrs R.

Mrs R What is it, Sue?

Sue takes out her handkerchief, Oh, it is terrible, Mrs
Ridley, it is terrible. The doctor's son was run down by
an automobile, and the fiends rode off and left him lie
in the road.

At these words Mrs R. is so horror stricken, she is lost
for words; she staggers and grasps chair for support.

Sue I'm not surprised to see you take on like that. Mrs R.
stands motionless. He was such a good boy, everybody
loved him so. If--if they can only save him. I would
give five years of my life if they caught the murderers.

Mrs R repeats, Murderers?

Sue Of course, the are murderers; they are worse than that,
a murderer kills outright; they do'nt let a man lay half-
dead to suffer like those joy-riders did.

Mrs R's antent suffering is depicted in her attitude;
she stands motionless, not knowing what to do or say.

A pause.

Mrs R Have they any clue?

Sue The only thing they know is that it was a ~~XXXXX~~ big, grey
car, that ran him down; a car that something like yours, but
then there's lots of big grey cars.

Mrs R in trembling tone, Who told them it was a big grey car?

Sue A boy told an officer; he saw the smash up; he tried to

chase after the car, but the devils put on full speed ,
so he gave up running. And when he came back poor Mr
Hilden was still laying in the road, bleeding almost to
death,

Mrs R. staggers, as if about to faint.

Sue looks at her, You feel faint? I'll get you some water.

Mrs R No,no, I'm allright. A pause. What I can't understand
is how he laid there so long and no one saw him.

Sue That's just it; those joy riders leave it to fate. Oh,
somebody will be sure to pick him up, that's how they
console themselves, the cowards. If I could pass sentence
on one of them I'd give him prison for life.

Mrs R. battling to keep up her courage, takes a step
towards the door. They both listen.

Dr, from within: You were right.

At these words Mrs R's eyes open wide, horror depicted
in them.

Sue in awe-stricken tone: He must be dead.

Mrs R. is swaying as she still listens.

Dr L. from within: You did your best, doctor.

Dr, from within, in mournful tone: My Boy, my poor boy.

Mrs R. falls into maid's arms. Sue places her on chair,
runs to get some water, returns in a moment and hands
glass to Mrs R. She takes a few sips.

Mrs R whispers, What have I done.

Sue in surprised tone: What did you say? She looks at Mrs R's distorted face, Poor soul, the shock's gone to her head. She stops to think a moment. I wonder if Dr Lambert is still here. She goes to door, listens a moment then walks in.

Mrs R whispers, I--I must wake Annette; we must get out before ---A pause---She tries to rise but sinks back into chair. She sobs.---I can't stand up, all my will power has left me. What shall I do, what can I do?--She clenches her hands--

Enter Dr Hilden, pale and haggard looking.

Mrs R sees him; they look at each other trying to read one another's thoughts.

Mrs R stammers: I--I wish I knew how to console you, doctor.

Dr after a moment's silence: You will need the same consolation before many minutes have passed.

Mrs R in terrified tone, What do you mean?

Dr I mean that you are going to pay; that right here, in this room, you are going to be tried, convicted and pay the penalty.

Mrs R. rises with great difficulty, but does not speak. She looks at the doctor with dreadful anxiety depicted on her face.

Dr So you really thought I believed your story, didn't you? Mrs R. does not answer; she just keeps on looking at the doctor, terrified.

Dr repeats, as he grasps her roughly by the wrist, Didn't you? Answer me.

Mrs R in low tone, Yes.

Dr Well, I am going to show you how clever you were.

he grits his teeth as he approaches her.

Mrs R cries out: He's gone mad. --She calls:--Sue, Sue, come here quickly.

Dr I'm as sane as I hope to be the rest of my life.

Sue enters: Did you call, Mrs Ridley?

Mrs R Yes, yes.

Dr You may go, Sue; Mrs Ridley does need you.

Mrs R But I do.

Dr to Sue, This is my home; you will take my orders, and no others. You may go.

Sue looks suspiciously at Mrs R. and leaves.

Mrs R Please, please let me go.

Dr Not until you have paid the penalty. Now your trial begins. You ran down a boy. If he were not my son I would do just as I am going to do now. It was a human you struck down and left lying in the road. If you had at least stopped and carried him to the nearest doctor you might have saved his life; but you feared the damages you may have had to pay, and you couldn't part with your money. It was easier to take a chance on the boy's life, wasn't it?

Mrs R I didn't think he was so badly hurt.

Dr Then, why didn't you stop? It may have cost you only a trifle and your conscience would have been at rest.

Mrs R I was sorry I didn't stop. I wanted to turn back; but the chauffeur assured me some one had picked him up by that time

Dr Then, why didn't you tell me the truth?

Mrs R Because I know you to be just at all times, and I feared

to be dragged through the courts.

Dr So, to save yourself any trouble whatever you decided to hide all traces of your crime and perhaps in a short time forget all about it; but you didn't succeed. I saw in a glance at both of you what had happened. I made up my mind to punish you, and in less than a moment I saw how it could be done.

Mrs R in tone of horror, What are you going to do?

Dr Do you think I waited till I saw it was my own ^{you} son killed? It was a life you sacrificed, and it made no difference to me whose life it was. It lay in my power to punish you, and I did it.

Mrs R dazed, repeats: You did it. What did you do?

Dr The drops I gave your daughter was poison.

Mrs R Shrieks, No, no, you didn't do that. I won't believe it. She looks at door wild eyed and terror stricken. She staggers over to the door, turns knob and finds door is locked. She tries to smile. That--that proves you are trying to frighten me or you would let me see her.

Dr That proves she is still alive and it is in my power to save her, the same as you could have saved my son if you had stopped and rushed him to a doctor.

Mrs R looks at him bewildered, You are either mad or you are trying to punish me with this awful suspense, but I know you wouldn't deliberately take the life of an innocent child

Dr Did'nt you deliberately crush out the life of my child?

Mrs R No, no, it was not deliberate; it was an accident.

Dr I am not talking about the accident; it's what you did after. If I kill your daughter, it's an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but you killed my son for fear you would have to give up some of your money.

Mrs R You just said: If I kill your daughter; then--then, it wasn't poison you gave her?

Dr It was poison that kills in one hour. He takes out his watch and looks at same---It is fifty minutes since she took the drops. In ten minutes your daughter will be as lifeless as my son.

Mrs R. stands there like a mad woman, looking at him. He takes a chair over to door, stands on chair, opens transom then steps down off chair, while she stands there watching him.

Dr Now, Mrs Ridley, you can speak to your daughter. She may have something to say to you.

Mrs R cries out despairingly: Annette, Annette. Darling.

A nn from within, Mother, mother, I wish you would come in to me; I feel dreadfully ill.

At these words Mrs R. looks wildly at the doctor.

Mrs R Doctor, you wo'nt, oh, I know you wo'nt. I know you too well, you wouldn't take the life of a fly, much less of a human being.

Dr I f you are consoling yourself with that, Mrs Ridley, you are making the mistake of your life. Your daughter has eight more minutes to live.

Mrs R in tones of horror, You mean you have really given her poison and you intend to let her die?

Dr coldly, I spoke plainly and truthfully. A few minutes will convince you.

Mrs R. Staggered to phone and picks up receiver. Dr rushes over to her and takes receiver from her. She rushes to window and throws it open.

Mrs R cries: Help.

Dr goes over, places hand over her mouth and closes window.

Mrs R It is easy to fight a woman, isn't it?

Dr It is easier to strike a boy from behind and then let him lie to suffer or die.

Mrs R I would give every dollar I possess to bring your boy back to life. I swear it. Please, oh, please, don't let my child die. You said you could save her if you tried. You will. For God's sake, you will. ---He does not speak but stands looking at her.--She runs to door.---Annette, Annette dear.

Ann from within. I am choking, mother; get the doctor quick.

Mrs R. Runs to Dr and throws herself on her knees.

Mrs R For God's sake, doctor, save my little girl. You won't let my darling die, when it is in your power to help her. I deserve to be punished, I know it; but the suspense and suffering I have gone through in the last hour should satisfy you.

Dr coldly: The suffering you caused me will last a life time.

Mrs R I know, I know, but it's done; it can't be helped. Don't make my innocent child pay for my crime.--She rushes to door again, calls:---Annette, Annette,----She gets no answer--
--She cries loud:--Annette, please answer me.--She looks

wildly at Dr and asks:--Is she dead?

Dr looking at watch, No, but she is too weak to speak. She has four minutes more to live.

Mrs R You could still save her?

Dr I could.

Mrs R And you will?

Dr shakes his head: No.

Mrs R cries, It is murder, doctor, it is murder; it means the electric chair.

Dr coldly, For both of us. You killed my son, I killed your daughter.

Mrs R You are not right in your mind; I can see that. You were always so kind, so good and so gentle.

Dr coldly, And so just.

Mrs R This is not just; it is cruel to make an innocent child pay for her mother's crime.

Dr The sins of the parent falls upon the child.

Mrs R It isn't fair, it isn't right; and you so honorable a man.

She pleads again: you can't do it, you won't do it.

Dr takes out his watch looks at it, then at Mrs R. She looks at him with wildly dilated eyes. She is breathing heavily and sways from side to side. A pause.

Dr It's done. Your child is dead.

She stands as if petrified for a few moments.

Mrs R cries out, It isn't true, it isn't true, I don't believe it. You would open that door.

He walks to door, takes key from pocket and opens door.
She looks first at him then at door, then slowly walks
in. A cry of horror is heard.

Mrs R. is heard: Annette, Annette, dar ling, speak to me.

All is quiet for a few moments.

Mrs R comes rushing in, You, you call yourself a man. She
grabs burning lamp and throws it at the doctor.

All becomes dark. Silence a few moments.

Dr's voice is heard: Your mother is still asleep.

A door is heard opening, but all is still dark.

Ann is heard: I think I better wake her, it is getting
late, and we must find Roy.

Dr is heard: I suppose he will wait for the train.

Ann is heard: I will wake her.

Dr turns on light. Mrs R. is seen twisting and turning
on ~~floor~~ couch; covers are on the floor.

Dr She must have had a very restless sleep.

Ann bends down and kisses her mother, Mrs R. slowly opens her
eyes, sits up and looks steadily at Annette, then at Dr, then
again at Annette. She looks around room then at door, then
again at her daughter.

Mrs R whispers, It was a dream. She takes Annette into her arms
and hugs her, then looks up at doctor. Say something,
doctor; I want to hear you speak.

Dr smiling, You have been dreaming, have'nt you?

Mrs R rises, breathing a sigh of relief: Of course you're
different; you are not the man-----A pause---Doctor, I

have a confession to make. I told you my chauffeur lost control of the car and we came near being killed. It wasn't true. It wasn't true. We ran down a boy; I feared the consequences and told Clarke to put on full speed.

Dr in astonished tone, You do'nt mean to tell me you left the boy lay in the road?

Mrs R I did; but I am sorry. And now you must help me, doctor; we must find that boy. If it costs every dollar I have in the world I must do full justice to that boy. I can't live with that on my conscience. I don't want to live in that constant torture. You will help me, doctor, you will?

Dr I will; but suppose it is too late?

Mrs R I do'nt think it is as bad as that. She turns to Annette. Do you, Annette?

Ann The collision was a pretty hard one.

Dr closes his eyes.

Dr You made a terrible mistake, Mrs Ridley, but I will do the best I can for you. --He picks up receiver---Police Headquarters. ---Ann goes to her mother's side; both stand trembling with anxiety. Bell rings. Yes, Police Headquarters Have you any report of a --- Voices are heard in the hall. Enter two detectives. Doctor hangs up receiver; looks at men.

Det. Who is the owner of that big grey car out there?

Annette clings to her mother.

Mrs R in trembling tone, I am.

Det You ran down a boy on a wheel, didn't you?

Mrs R whispers, Yes.

Det your name, please?

Mrs R Mrs James Ridley.

Det looks surprised at the other officer, then repeats:Ridley?

Mrs R Yes.

Det after a short pause, Mrs Ridley, the boy you ran down was your own son.

He hands her a card; she reads it and grasps chair for support. She is afraid to ask the next question. Doctor sees this.

Dr Is the boy seriously hurt?

Det looking at Mrs R.: The boy is dead.

At these words Mrs R. reels and falls to floor. Dr quickly bends over her, lifts her head, takes her pulse, then slowly lays her down. Doctor rises.

Det You must revive her doctor; we must do our duty.

Dr takes Annette in his arms, then looks at detectives.

Dr It is your duty to remove your hats out of respect to the dead.

Annette sobs. Detectives look at Mrs R., remove their hats, and with bowed heads leave the room.

Annette sobs.

Curtain.